

The Flying Colours Project

For West Cork Arts Centre's New Building

Introduction

This pack is for teachers who have signed up for West Cork Arts Centre's *Flying Colours Project* in partnership with the West Cork Education Centre. It provides simple ideas for working with your class to create colourful flying creatures that will be installed en masse in West Cork Arts Centre's new building for its opening season, bringing the enthusiasm, energy and creativity of children's artwork into the new space to bring it alive with colour.

These lesson plans focus on exploring colour, in particular analogous colour schemes, and construction with paper and cardboard. All the materials used should be easily available and not costly, most you probably already have in the classroom store cupboard. There are a few simple but important guidelines that must be followed to ensure the children's work is suitable to include in the installation so please read these carefully and make sure you comply with them.

Once the work is installed and the new building opened in January 2015, come and visit, book a tour for your class, to see the *Flying Colours* installation, the opening exhibition by professional artists and the new building itself.

Important information before you begin, please read carefully:

- For your work to be included in the installation you must have registered your details with West Cork Education Centre.
- All completed artwork must be delivered to West Cork Arts Centre on;

Monday's – Wednesday's 10am - 5pm at the current premises on North Street during November

Please note this is a change to the original advertised dates

- Due to the nature of the installation artwork will NOT be able to be returned to schools after the exhibition is finished.
- Completing the project should take 2 or 3 classroom sessions
- Each child's work should include their name and the townland where they live, somewhere within the artwork, this is NOT to be done by the teacher attaching a label to the finished work, but by the child somewhere within the work, as part of the work. Ways to do this are addressed later on in this pack.
- Registered participating schools will be listed on a sign near the installation, school details do not need to be attached to the individual artworks.
- The aim of this installation is to encourage children's creativity and represent their individuality within the whole. As such, we would ask teachers to allow plenty of scope for children to be individual and different in the ways they approach making their creatures. This pack offers suggestions for techniques, we would encourage you to show children these techniques, and then allow them to decide what to do with them so that each child's work is as unique as they are. We would discourage asking children to follow a formulaic approach that results in a set of similar looking creatures.
- We encourage all schools that take part in this project to book a tour to visit our new building, see the completed installation, and find their own creatures within it!

**Stage one; Paint and colour:
Working with Analogous Colours, Colour Mixing, and Markmaking**

Theory:

This project is based around colour and using the idea of *analogous* colours, so first you need to explain what this means to your class.

Senior classes:

We often talk about *complementary* colours which are *opposite* each other on the colour wheel (see left hand diagram below), analogous colours are *next to* each other on the colour wheel, and consist of a dominant colour (usually a primary or secondary colour) and the adjacent colours to one or both sides. An example of analogous colours, as seen below in the right hand diagram, would be Yellow as the dominant colour (a primary colour) and Orange (a secondary colour) along with yellow/orange (the tertiary colour between them). Another example would be Green (a secondary colour) as the dominant colour, with yellow/green (tertiary) and blue/green (tertiary) either side of it. For this project senior classes should be asked to choose three adjacent colours to work with, from the colour wheel including tertiary colours.

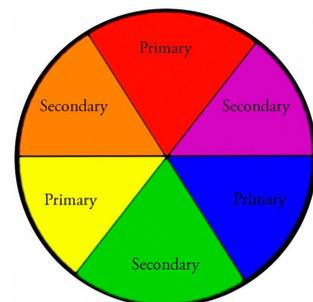


Complementary Colours



Junior classes:

Younger classes can work with adjacent colours in a simpler way. For very young children show them the basic colour wheel, to the right (excluding tertiary colours, see above) and ask them to choose two of the primary colours to work with. For example they may pick red and yellow, and then they will be able to make orange as well. Slightly older children could be asked to work with any two colours that are next to each other in this colour wheel (a primary and secondary).



For all classes when mixing paints the variety of colours that can be made is much greater if your paint supply includes two shades of each primary colour. For example:

Reds could include Brilliant Red, Crimson, or Vermillion

Blues could include Cyan, Cobalt Blue, Ultramarine or Brilliant Blue

Yellows could include Lemon Yellow, Yellow Ochre, or Brilliant Yellow

Practice:

Cover tables with newspaper or your usual table covering, and provide each child with access to the following:

At least **3 pieces of A4 card** per child (white A4 card can be bought in packs at a reasonable cost, its a good idea to put the childs name on the back of each sheet before they begin painting)

brushes, of varying sizes,

palletes for paint,

palletes for mixing (plastic or paper plates work well),

water container for washing brushes

paper towel or cloth for drying brushes

paint, you will need at least one, preferably two, of each primary colour and white. Also possibly green, purple, orange and brown if you have them.

All Classes

Explain that everyone is to fill their sheets of card with colour, edge to edge, using the analogous colours they've chosen to work with. Show them images of abstract paintings that use expressive and interesting brushwork to give them the idea that they are not painting "flat" colour, but making interesting mixes of colour using markmaking and brushwork. See below for some examples of artists/paintings to show them, perhaps leave them up on the whiteboard for inspiration while they are working.



l-r: Abstract expressionists like James Brooks and Jackson Pollock, with expressive markmaking, or abstract Irish artist Sean Scully, who uses blocks of colour.



l-r; impressionists like Monet, or Turner whose landscapes become almost abstract

Demonstrate yourself before they begin.

Show them how to mix colours together to make new colours, shades and tones, and demonstrate different ways to use the brush, stroking, splodging, swirling, short choppy marks, or smooth broad marks and 'scoring' into the paint with the handle of the brush. Ask them to fill each sheet of card, edge to edge, by making as many different colours as they can on each page with the paints they have, this will encourage them to experiment. Remind them they are not trying to paint a picture of something, but just to fill the page with colour. See below for examples of some painted sheets. More patterned elements like dots or stripes of different colour shades could also be used, and wax crayons or oil pastels can also be used before and during painting to add extra markmaking.



When you are ready to begin give them the paint. For older children if you think they understand that they are using them to mix only colours within their chosen range give them a full range of colours, especially if you only have one of each primary colour available. A very small amount of blue can be useful for a child working with an orange, orange/red, red colour scheme, to make a brownier orange for example, or a very small amount of red, will help make a duller green when working with a yellow/green, green, green/blue colour scheme. If you don't think they will use the other colours cautiously then just provide them with the colours for their colour scheme, and white. Encourage them to mix colours themselves not just rely on the bottles.



When they have finished the first sheet ask them to try and make the next one different, lighter perhaps, or darker, or different marks or patterns, or more blue, or more red.

You could also paint other things for collaging with such as paper doilies, baking parchment or other types of card.



When each child has filled at least three sheets of card, leave them to dry for use in the next session.

Extra Activity:

Perhaps for those who finish early or as a homework exercise ask the children to collect materials from within their colour range to collage with. Go through magazines and tear out pieces of colour or collect tissue/crepe paper, wrapping paper, cellophane, recycled coloured card or paper scraps from home or the art cupboard. For younger children you could provide them with an envelope to take home, with the colours they're using written on (eg. Red/ orange/yellow) so that parents can help.



Stage Two: Construction

Making Flying Creatures; cutting, tearing, folding, rolling and gluing.

Theory:

This stage of the project will use the coloured sheets made in stage one to construct imaginative flying creatures. These creatures will be attached to the wall, so need only be one sided (not to be viewed from all angles).

Ask the children to research all different kinds of flying creatures, perhaps as a homework assignment, before stage two begins. Include real creatures like birds, bats, butterflies or insects, and imaginary creatures like dragons, or winged horses. Look at images like those below for inspiration. If you want to extend the learning you could ask them to choose a specific type of creature and find out all about them.

Have a group discussion on what flying creatures might look like:

- Discuss basic body parts and shapes; Ask them to name all the body parts they can think of that a flying creature might have? Body, head, wings, legs, antennae, eyes, beaks, claws, tail etc. make a list on the board.
- Ask them to suggest what shapes those parts might be, or use descriptive words for them. For example a tail could be long, short, pointed, fluffy, thick, thin, or spiky, a body could be fat, thin, round, long, bumpy, straight, bent or curved.
- Ask them to think about how many of each part a creature might have – two or four wings? One or two tails? A body in one part, or divided up into segments like some insects.
- Discuss symmetry in flying creatures – how each side of the body has the same wings, legs antennae, patterns etc. So when they make these parts they will be making them in pairs.
- Ask what textures and patterns you might find? Scales, fur, feathers? Designs like on peacock or butterfly wings? Stripes like a bee? Discuss lots of possibilities real and outlandish to get them thinking. The more you look at images and talk about shape and texture the more ideas they will have. You could also ask them to do rough drawings to get them visualising ideas, but this is not essential.



Images of flying creatures taken from the internet as examples you might use to get children thinking.

Practice

You will need:

PVA glue, in containers with glue spreaders, lollipop sticks or brushes for spreading

Scissors

Painted card, as made in the first session

You may also decide to use:

Recycled cardboard, from cereal boxes or corrugated card

Pencils or another drawing implement for marking out shapes

Oil pastels or wax crayons for adding detail, texture and their name and townland

tissue paper, colour magazines, recycled paper/card, tin foil, paper doilies and so on for collaging

pritt sticks (or equivalent), **masking tape, doublesided sticky tape** or a **stapler**

googly eyes and feathers available in packs from craft shops
pegs, bulldog clips or paper clips, to help hold together parts while they are gluing, or as part of the final creature

Senior classes

Senior classes should be given as much leeway as possible to be creative and come up with their own approach to making their flying creature. Show them some of the different techniques, below, they can try and let them come up with their own way of combining them. They can always experiment with scrap paper first before using their coloured card, to see what works and what doesn't. Remind them to focus on the symmetrical nature of flying creatures.

Basic Techniques; Cutting, Folding, Rolling, Tearing, Gluing etc

- Fold a piece of card in half and cut into it to make wing shapes, or a symmetrical body.
- Cut again to create a 'hollow' shape in the wing, and layer the cut out pieces back on top in a different position for a layered wing, or cut strips to glue across to make the vein-like structure of a wing
- Fold a square piece of card in half diagonally three times and cut shapes into it when folded, like when we make paper snowflakes at christmas. This could then be cut in half to make two wings, or folded back on itself to make a more elaborate and three dimensional wing, or cut up and layered to so that the layers below show through the gaps.
- Keep any scrap pieces that have been cut out, as these can be glued on to create extra interest.



- Make concertina folds in a rectangle of painted card by folding one way, then the other alternately, folds can be big, small, or varying widths. Squeeze together at the end or the middle to make one, or a pair of wings. Peg or clip to hold whilst gluing.
- Shape wings by cutting into a curve or point, or cut slots into the edges of the wing shape to make a feathered effect
- Roll rectangles of painted card around a pencil, either straight or in a cone, glue along the edge, and peg or clip the end to hold in place while glue dries.
- A number of rolls can be placed together to create a wing, or a larger piece of card can be rolled from both ends .
- Strips of card loosely rolled make great antennae
- Again slots can be cut into the ends to create, feathered effects, lengths of rolls can be varied to create different shapes and so on. Make enough rolls to create wings for both sides in the same way.
- Tearing can create a more natural edge than a cut edge. Torn strips can be added to the end of wings to create a “feathered” effect.
- Or a series of torn strips, getting gradually smaller, can be glued together to make a wing.
- Crumpling the painted card can create extra texture
- Use scraps of leftover painted card, or other materials gathered in the first session (magazine, tissue, etc in the colour scheme)to add interest, pattern or texture to the wings. They can be cut or torn in the shape of scales or feathers, or made into patterns like a butterfly, or peacock.



Putting together:

- Attaching the parts together must be done firmly so they do not fall apart.
- Use PVA glue to attach flat surfaces together, a peg or paper clip can help hold in place while the glue dries, or can even be left on with the glue as part of the creature.
- It can be helpful to trace the body shape onto cereal box cardboard, and cut out, so you have two identical pieces, use the cereal box piece as the backing, attach the wings, legs etc and then sandwich together with the painted card body shape on top.
- If there are thicker folded or rolled ends of card that can't be held just with glue, use masking tape where it can't be seen, or a well placed staple to ensure it holds firm.



Finishing off:

- Eyes and other features can be drawn on with oil pastels or crayons. Or use googly eyes, available in craft shops.
- Some children may want to get creative and add collaged eyelashes, folded beaks, pointed ears or other interesting features. All these can be cut out of the painted card, or made from your other coloured collage items.
- Don't forget to ask children to include their first name and the townland where they live. Using a crayon, pastel or coloured pencil, in their colour scheme, they can add their name and place to the wings, or body or on the legs or antennae, wherever they find space, encourage them to keep it symmetrical – name on both wings, or name on one and townland on the other for example.
- When the glue is all dry check that everything is holding firm, and will not fall apart, we will not be able to include creatures that are too fragile or floppy in the final installation, so make sure none of your class is disappointed.



Junior Classes

Junior classes, especially infants, will not be able to achieve the more complex ideas presented above, however teachers of these younger classes should still read through the section above to understand the ideas and approaches. This section is a supplement to suggest simpler ideas to adapt for young children, older children may incorporate these ideas in their designs too. With very young classes it may be necessary to give them more instruction and less freedom to come up with their own designs than the older classes, however it is still important to allow them some creativity in decorating their own creature so it is unique.

- Whilst infants cutting skills may be limited a basic wing shape can be made by folding a piece of card in half, and cutting off the corners of the folded edge. Encourage the children to try this limited amount of cutting, even if the result is uneven or ragged, it is still their own work.
- This wing shape, and the two triangular pieces cut off, can be layered and held in place with glue and a coloured peg (matching their colour scheme) for a very basic creature.
- Allow them to add to this in their own way – with crayons, gluing on torn scraps in their colour scheme and so on.
- As long as a child can use scissors they should be encouraged to cut their own wing shapes, no matter how irregular they may turn out. If not, perhaps they can draw the shape themselves onto the card with a crayon and get help with the cutting.



- Torn strips of card can be criss-crossed and glued together to make wing shapes
- A rectangle of card can be rolled and held with glue and a peg or staple
- If during the painting stage the children do not name their sheets they can be used communally. To limit the need for cutting you can then cut their painted card into strips and different shapes and sizes of rectangle or triangle before the session very quickly using a guillotine, and seat the children at different tables according to the colour schemes (for example a blue/ green table with all the blue/ green painted card shapes and other collected scraps). They can then choose a piece for the body and glue other shapes onto it for wings head etc. Or layer up different sized triangles to make wings.



- If the child is able to write their own name they should do so, in a coloured crayon onto the wing or body, and the townland, or village name. If the child is not able to write this for themselves you can write it on for them, but so that it does not dominate the child's own work, and fits in with the colour scheme.
- The most important thing is to have fun and be creative, but at the end of the day make sure each child's creature is properly stuck together and isn't going to fall apart as we will not be able to use fragile or floppy creatures and would not want anyone in your class to be disappointed.



And Finally..

Completed work must be delivered to West Cork Arts Centre on the dates specified above. If you have any queries about any aspect of the project, feel free to contact me at the details below. Tours of the building, opening exhibition and flying colours installation can also be booked via West Cork Arts Centre at the details below. Tours cost €2 per child, or €3 per child for a tour followed by a practical workshop, and can be arranged to suit the school for any date following our opening in 2015.

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images from teachers workshops at West Cork Education Centre